



Melphalan (Alkeran[®], L-PAM[®])

At the Clinical Center referred to as melphalan (MEL-fa-lan).

How Given: Orally (by mouth) or intravenously (by vein)

Drug Action: Melphalan stops the growth of cancer cells by binding together or breaking apart the building blocks that form DNA. DNA is the genetic material in cells used to make new cells.

Side Effects:

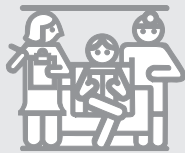
1. Bone marrow effects can include a temporary decrease in white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells. These usually occur 2 to 4 weeks after treatment and can last for an extended period.
2. Nausea and vomiting can occur.

Special Instructions:

1. Tell your nurse immediately if the drug stings or burns during treatment. If the drug leaks out of the vein it can damage tissue. Prompt treatment is essential in order to minimize damage.
2. Take anti-nausea medication on a schedule as directed, even if you are not having nausea.
3. Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products unless prescribed by your NIH doctor.
4. The effects of melphalan on blood cells are gradual and can last for a long time. You will need blood counts over an extended period after receiving melphalan.

5. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you

- are unable to take your melphalan by mouth
- have a temperature of 101.0 °F (38.3 °C) at any time, or have a temperature of at least 100.4 °F (38.0 °C) that lasts for 1 hour or occurs two times in a 24-hour period
- have any unusual bleeding or bruising
- are unable to drink for more than 1 day or unable to eat for more than 2 days
- have pain, discomfort, or redness at the injection site following treatment by vein



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series
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Nursing Department

Questions about the Clinical Center? OCCC@cc.nih.gov